



Hungarian Civil Registration Records

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Civil Registration Records

Civil Registration (Állami anyakönyvek) refers to birth, marriage, and death records maintained by civil authorities. The Hungarian government began civil registration began on Oct. 1, 1895, due to conflicts from couples of mixed religious backgrounds and church authorities.¹ The original records are stored at the civil registry office (*Anyakönyvi hivatal*). Each registry office has indexes to their civil registration records. The registry offices also sent transcripts (*másodpéldány*) to the county or city archives up to 1980. The county or city archives do not have the indexes.

To read these records you need to read the printed text on the form (or at least the key words) and decipher the handwriting. Gratefully, the government used standardized forms throughout the country, although there are small variations in different parts of the county. This class will focus on the templates used from 1895-1906 and from 1907-1952.

1895-1906

The forms used at this time are harder to read, used a lot of space per entry, and created many bound volumes. The template from 1895 to 1906 for birth and death entries used an entire page per entry. Marriage records used two pages, the front and back. The initial format had the mother of the bride on the second page. The names of the parents were moved to the first page in 1898 and the witnesses, remarks, and signatures were on the second page.

1907-1952

Beginning in 1907, the template for birth, marriage, and death records changed to a register format with many entries on the same page. These records are easier to understand and saved space.

Areas formerly part of the Kingdom of Hungary

- Slovakia: By law, when the last entry in a registry book is more than 100 years old, the book is sent to the state archives. There are 36 district archives. Archived civil registers are not restricted by privacy laws. Registers with entries younger than 100 years are at the civil registry offices.
- Slovenia: The records for the Prekmurje and Međimurje regions are at the Maribor Regional Archives (1895-1918). FamilySearch microfilmed these records. They are

¹ The 1868 legal reform made the "reversal" statements invalid in mixed religious marriages. Instead, children born to parents of mixed religious affiliation were supposed to follow the religion according to gender, e.g., if Father was Catholic then sons would be Catholic. If mother Protestant, then daughter's protestant.

published in the database called "Slovenia, Premurje and Međimurje, Civil Registers, 1895-1918."

- Romania: Civil registers can be searched at the county archives, or requests can be made to the civil registry offices.
- Ukraine: Civil registers can be searched at the county archives, or requests can be made to the civil registry offices.

Reading Records

To read Hungarian Civil Registration records we need to consider:

- Hungarian is a Uralic language so it's fundamentally different than Germanic, Latin, or Slavic based languages. Principles such as vowel harmony, 18 grammatical cases for nouns, compound words, and word order complicate our interpretation.
- The Hungarian language has 44 letters in the alphabet. Letters such as Á, Cs, Dz, Dzs, É, Gy, Í, Ly, Ny, Ó, Ö, Ő, Sz, Ty, Ú, Ü, Ű, and Zs can be difficult to interpret from our English view.
- Words on historical documents can be influenced by 79 variants of consonants and 94 variants of vowels which were simplified to modern spelling.
- You need to read and understand the printed words on the forms.
- You need to read and interpret the cursive handwriting. The 1907 ABC Primer can help with handwriting see https://en.mandadb.hu/tetel/549546/Magyar_ABC_es_olvasokonyv
- Numbers are usually written out in text form next to the numbers e.g., days, months, years.

Birth, Marriage and Death Forms

There are examples of birth, marriage, and death civil registration forms with English translations on the FamilySearch wiki. The translations can help you analyze and interpret the forms you are looking at, see:

1. Sample Images Birth Pre-1907, Marriage 1898-1906, and Death Pre-1907
Birth Post-1907, Marriage Post-1907, Death Post-1907
at https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungary_Civil_Registration
2. Sample Images 1905, 1916, and 1934 at:
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungary_Civil_Registration - FamilySearch Historical Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungary_Civil_Registration_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records)

Searchable Databases Online

You can search Hungarian Civil Registration Records through multiple providers. FamilySearch and the Hungarian Society for Family History Research (Magyar Családtörténet-kutató Egyesület or MACSE) have the largest searchable databases online. The goal to index all available birth, marriages, and deaths from civil registration is not complete but each provider is making progress. Smaller versions of the database are available through Ancestry and MyHeritage and will grow over time.

- FamilySearch, Hungary Civil Registration, 1895-1980, with over 3,700,000 indexed entries at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1452460>
- Hungarian Society for Family History Research (MACSE) <https://macse.hu/databases/en/default.aspx>
- Ancestry, Hungary, Civil Registration, 1895-1978, with just over 1,000,000 indexed entries at <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9895/>
- MyHeritage, Civil Registration, 1895-1980, with just over 471,000 indexed entries at <https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-30018/hungary-civil-registration-1895-1980?s=217048351>

For Areas Not Indexed

If you are researching an area where civil registration records have not been indexed, then you need to search record images through the FamilySearch Catalog. The steps are:

1. Open the FamilySearch Catalog <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>.
2. Type in the name a village, town, or city, e.g., Inke in Somogy county.
3. Choose the topic Civil registration.
4. Choose the type of record and time by clicking on the respective camera symbol.
5. The register is in chronological order. Navigate the pages to find the person, and date that you are searching for.

Other Resources

1. Hungarian Alphabet https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_alphabet (*scroll down to see Historic spellings used in names and historical documents.*)
2. 1907 ABC Primer, Magyar ÁBC és olvasókönyv https://en.mandadb.hu/dokumentum/866784/Magyar_ABC_es_olasokonyv_1907.pdf
3. FamilySearch Coverage Table: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungary_Civil_Registration_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records_Coverage_Table

4. Hungarian Genealogical Word List
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungarian_Genealogical_Word_List
5. Hungary Personal Names
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hungary_Personal_Names
6. Hungarian Names (by Hungarian Institute of Linguistics)
<http://www.nytud.hu/oszt/nyelvmuvelo/utonevek/>
7. Instructions to use MACSE
<https://larasgenealogy.blogspot.com/2019/03/hungarian-vital-records-from-macse-for.html>
8. Hungarian numbers (on Hungarian Language page in Wikipedia)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_language#Numbers